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Thuwar[1] versus *Azlam*[2] – Identity Dilemmas of Libyan Minorities during the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring in Libya has been labelled as the 17 February Revolution. It refers to the date of the first demonstrations which broke out in Benghazi. Formally, it has ended eight months later on October 20, 2011, with the death of Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi and the formal collapse of his regime.

Culture of Victor

One out of many consequences of the revolution, the one which will be imprinted upon the Libyan society for much longer is "the culture of the victor." According to the terminology that is widespread among Libyans, it is a classification of individuals, tribes, or communities of entire towns, as either *thuwar* which means anti-Qaddafi revolutionaries, or *azlam* which describes regime loyalists. The alias – *thuwar* – means that its bearer is a victor who shall be treated with honour, respect, and dignity, whereas the definition of *azlam* indicates somebody defeated, in shame and infamy. Those to be perceived as *azlam* cannot access effective protection from the government and are at the permanent risk of persecution.

In the case of towns, *thuwar* label is given only to the communities living in a number of small cities such as Zentan, Misurata, or selected districts of bigger ones such as Souk Al Jumaa in Tripoli. Their inhabitants were among the first who stood against Qaddafi early in February 2011, and were fighting until the end of his rule. This is giving them a kind of legitimacy of "the protectors of revolution." Hence, the armed militia groups – *katiibat*[3] – from these cities behave as if they were the national army. They undertake the function of security

[1] Arab.: ثوار – English: revolutionaries.
[2] Arab.: ازلام – English: ousted.
[3] Arab.: كتيبة English: battalion.

controlling situation in other parts of the country, sometimes also on request of the Libyan government (Toaldo 2014: 2).

The citizens from other towns of this large country are treated either as non-participants in the revolution or as *azlam*. The latter case concerns, for example, Beni Walid, a town inhabited by the Warfalla tribe. According to one source (Cole and Mangan 2016: 24), the youth from Beni Walid formed a significant proportion of Qaddafi loyalist fighters during the 17 February Revolution. Furthermore, the city became a safe harbour for a number of figures considered to be war criminals for whom arrest warrant had been issued. However, according to another source (Shargieh 2013: 18), only few citizens of Beni Walid were fighting on the dictator's side. In any case, the term a*zlam* was then used both for Beni Walid inhbitants and for the Warfalla tribe. Even the failed coup against Qaddafi, conducted by Beni Walid inhabitants alone in 1993, for which the town and its inhabitants were persecuted for years, was not "relevant" from the perspective of "the culture of the victor."

At the beginning of the 17 February Revolution, still before NATO intervention in Benghazi on March 19, 2011, it was difficult for the tribe elders to make a reasonable decision which party of the conflict shall be joined by the tribe. As it was stated by one of the tribal leaders from Nafoussa Mountains: "Some tribes weren't able to accurately read the protests […]. They didn't have Facebook or Twitter to know what exactly was happening. Their representatives in the Qaddafi regime told them [that] Qaddafi has everything under control, and they just listened and refused to join the revolution. Obviously, they paid a heavy price for that later" (Shargieh 2013: 39). Thus, there were mixed reactions to the revolution, with some tribes joining *thuwar,* other becoming *azlam,* or being neutral and just postponing the decision. It was either because of the lack of sufficient resources to affect the outcome of the conflict, or due to an opportunistic intention to join the winning party.

A similar dilemma has been faced by the Libyan tribes belonging to the main ethnic minorities. For the Amazigh, Tuaregh, Tebu, and Black Libyans such as the Tawergha, the right choice was essential in order to achieve recognition of their identity. However, even the choice of the *thuwar* side did not guarantee that the minorities' aspiration will be fulfilled in the post-revolutionary Libya. Hence, the polarisation of community into *azlam* and *thuwar,* expressed in "the culture of the victor," has been affecting the post-revolutionary reality in Libya, impeding the reconciliation process (Shargieh 2013: 35).

Ethnical Minorities in Libya

The major Libyan minorities such as the Amazigh, Tuareg, Tawergha, and Tebu, are considered to be ethnical groups represented either by a tribe or a

group of tribes, and *per se,* they differ from other groups in terms of: characteristics of physical appearance, culture, definition, and expression of their group's identity, for instance, clothing, or specific functions of kinship structures (Bokszański 2007: 80).

There is no consistency concerning estimation of the size of ethnic minorities in Libya. An available and reliable source (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments 2015: 8) presents the composition of 6.3 million of Libyan community as below:

Libyan Arab	75%
Egyptian and other Arab	15%
Black African [Libyans]	6%
Berber [Amazigh]	3%
Tuareg and Tebu	1%

However, there is no validation of the presented data, as, for example, another source estimates the population of Amazigh (Berbers[4]) up to six hundred thousand, that is, about 10 per cent of all Libyans. The difficulty in distinguishing among the minorities could be traced back to Qaddafi's time, and his claim that "all Libyans are Arabs." This claim is still present in the consciousness of Libyans, who are suspicious about the aspirations of the minorities. Their demand for separate rights, either political or cultural, for many Libyans represents an act of betrayal. Therefore, minorities are still marginalised, facing social exclusion and various forms of violence. Even though, April 9, 2013, the Libyan General National Congress adopted a law imposing at least one-year imprisonment on "anyone guilty of discrimination on the basis of class, group, region, gender or colour," interim governments enforce neither prohibitions nor punishments related to this act.

Especially these minority groups which are perceived as being *azlam* have "experienced harassments, violence, intimidation, discrimination forced displacement, indiscriminate shelling, looting and burning of homes. Camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) housing minority ethnic groups are often attacked by militias resulting in arbitrary arrests, abductions, deaths and the re-displacement of their residents" (Independent Advisory Group 2016: 5).

The extent to which tribal identity drives social, economic, and political activities of its members in post-Qaddafi Libya, in contrast to national identity, is essential for the prospects of the minorities in Libya.

Libyan Minorities within "Uncompleted" State

The independent Libya emerged as a state from Italian colonial oppression, and the turbulences of World War II, earliest in 1951 during a single event. The

[4] Originally considered as pejorative term "Berbers" stems from the Roman word – barbarians referring to the people the Romans have conquered.

United Kingdom of Libya presented then "little more than geographical expression. The three provinces that made up newly created country lacked most of the ingredients necessary for the creation of modern statehood: its citizens possessed no sense of national identity, and the newly created state barely managed to raise enough revenues to maintain even the most rudimentary state institutions or – the *sine qua non* of modern states – the monopoly of coercive power" (Vandewalle 2012: 4). Libyan tribes or collectively, the Libyans had neither time nor, most probably, an intention to develop a unified political movement of cross-geographical importance before independence. Within straight-line borders, drawn on the map by the Great Powers, the areas inhabited by various tribes were included, thus creating ethnic minorities.

The King – Idris Al Sanusi – was facing two difficult tasks at that time: building a modern state and creating its political community, both across three provinces with their tribal networks. These tasks were even more difficult to complete as the citizens of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan were afraid that monarchy would serve mainly as the tutelage of the Great Powers. Surprisingly, the execution of both tasks was additionally exacerbated by an unexpected inflow of additional funds. Since 1959, to a modest income from the rental of British and American military bases, revenues from hydrocarbon production have been added.

The hydrocarbon revenues have dramatically altered the Libyan political culture. Additional funds were accrued when both state-building and political integration were still in their infancy, so the process of their spending could not be "mediated through state institutions and extensive bargaining between the state and local societies" (Vandewalle 1998: 6). King Idris was then freed from "many of the burdens other countries faced during their state-building history – burdens that in all countries shape the political, economic and social relationships between rulers and ruled […] of taxation or accountability that can limit their actions" (Vandewalle 1998: 6). As a result, gains from hydrocarbon production were used to strengthen political alliances and the tribal structure, rather than to address collective needs. The same luxury to construct the contours of the Libyan political reality with neither political nor economic constraints was enjoyed by Colonel Muammar Qaddafi during his 42-year rule. He came to power through coup d'etat on September 1, 1969. After his *Al Fatah* Revolution Libya became a personified state, centralised around Qaddafi and his inner circle, inextricably linked to family and tribal relations (Paoletti 2011: 316).

> A number of interlocking factors extended this lopsided and incomplete nature of local [Libyan] state-building: the legacy of the Italian period; the sudden arrival of enormous revenues that accrued directly to the country's rulers without, in the process, creating adequate checks and balances; the political exclusion of the Libyan population, the lingering attractions of tribe and family, the eager-

> ness of the country's rulers not to perfect that state for their own ideological and often predatory purposes. (Vandewalle 2012: 5)

So during the sixty years of the United Kingdom of Libya and the Qaddafi era, the construction of a modern state and its institutions was not completed. This situation has consolidated the dichotomy of primordial social family ties within tribe structures, and more impersonal institutions of the modern state.

The independent Libya has ensured a secure basis for minorities' rights in the 1951 constitution. Its article 11 stated that all "Libyans shall be equal before the law" and "shall enjoy equal civil and political rights […] without distinction of religion, belief, race, language, wealth, kinship or political or social opinion" (John St 2014: 279). However, it was barely a declaration. During the time of the Kingdom, theTebu tribe, due to its tight links to Senussi clan, was better placed in the army and in security force than either in the tribe of Tuareg or Amazigh.

At the beginning of his rule, in 1973, Qaddafi announced the *Third Universal Theory* which stated that "[… minority's] political and economic problems can be only solved by the masses in whose hands power, wealth and arms should be placed. Viewing the minority as a political and economic minority is dictatorship and injustice" (al Qaddafi 1999: 107). This approach has been revised later on. Qaddafi has placed national unity and homogeneity of the society at the centre of his priorities, to the detriment of human and minorities' rights. Simultaneously, denying the presence of minorities in Libya, Qaddafi was covertly using tribal structure to reinforce his influence. He ensured that the selected representatives of different tribes had some access to material or other profits, using them to control their tribes or empowering some minorities' or lower-status tribes over traditional elders from higher-status clans (Cole and Mangan 2016: 6).

The 17 February Revolution has brought a change to the situation of minority ethnic groups. Even for the minorities fighting on *thuwar* side the positive outcomes were limited. The common goal – unifying all *thuwars* – conceded immediately after the death of Colonel Qaddafi, and the revolutionaries began to pursue their own particular interests. As a result, Libya did not survive the revolution as a fully functional state protecting the well-being of its citizens. As the remnants of state institutions had been destroyed, the tribes and armed groups stepped in to fill the void, acting as the guarantors of social stability and providers of security and justice services. Similar development continued after the collapse of the central state security in the middle of 2014, after the June 25 election. Anticipating unsuccessful results of voting, the radical groups re-started the civil war. The conflict between militias has escalated into a new, fierce phase with *thuwars* being now on opposite sides. Foreign companies and workers were again evacuated from Libya. As a result, Libyan economy was on the brink of collapse.

The lack of a common enemy, and the superiority of particular, regional goals over national ones made unity of the dispersed political and armed militia groups

much harder to accomplish than it was anticipated by both some Libyans managing oil and gas sector and the majority of expatriates working there. They were expecting that preserving the main source of Libyan revenues, which is hydrocarbon production, will be the utmost priority of any post-Qaddafi ruler in the country. It was even expressed in the popular belief presented in "Libya for free" (*Libya Hora*).[5] The collapse of the regime should ensure social well-being of all Libyans financed by the ongoing flow of hydrocarbon revenues, stolen earlier by Qaddafi and his inner circle of the most trusted supporters. Expectations were high, because for decades, unless they were involved in some forbidden political activity, Libyans were used to a relatively easy life facilitated by food distribution system based on the possession of "family booklets," free schools, free medical care and subsidised energy (e.g., gasoline and electricity). National wealth built on oil and gas business should continue after the collapse of Qaddafi regime, only increasing its standard.

However, the expectation of the ongoing oil production and inflowing revenues has not been materialised. Instead of one power centre, a power patchwork emerged with local rulers supported by their militias. Competing groups divided the controlled areas of the country among themselves. Some of the said rulers had an ambition to participate directly in the hydrocarbon wealth sharing. Oil and gas facilities became a pledge during bargaining over specific issues between the Libyan government and the armed groups. It was relatively easy to select an upstream or downstream facility placed closest to the location of the militia. These involved: oil field, pumping station, valve station, power station, loading facility or refinery scattered across the 1.76 million square kilometres of Libya. As a result, the production of oil went down from 1,5 million barrels per day to almost zero, due to the lack of access to the loading facilities.

It was also a modus of action used for the expression of political grievances by the minorities of the Amazigh (Laessing 2013: 1), Tebu, and Tuareg people. Yet, to enable functioning of the state, which for more than half a century was depending on additional revenues, hydrocarbon production is a must. However, as noted by a Libya Herald journalist "[…] because Libya's oil facilities are dispersed amongst the different Libyan tribes, power centres, regional and ethnic groups […] Libyans need to unite to ensure the continued production and export of oil" (Zaptia 2016: 1). Hence, tribes and regional power groups are in the forefront again. Minorities are only a part of the said puzzle.

Tribalism vs. National Identity

Tribalism and its specific aspect – tribe affiliation – encapsulates modes of social organisation based on bloodline and ties between clans. Tribalism and its

[5] Arab.: ليبيا حرة – English: Libya free.

meaning for Libyans has evolved over the centuries, initially in response to the outside powers, and more recently, to the internal situation, yet, it has always been protecting tribal or city interests against the external influence. In this sense it was creating a kind of anti-government policy. On the other hand, the external or internal efforts to install central government authority, introduced during the Ottoman era, were continued through the Italian colonial period, the time of the United Kingdom of Libya, the Qaddafi era, until the post-revolution reality. Therefore, in this sense, Libyan identity is a composition of Arab, African, Islamic, tribal, and ethnic roots. This "mixed identity" has affected the historical patterns of political participation and has been used by Libya's rulers either to unite or divide Libyans (Geha 2016: 110).

Contemporary tribalism is under the influence of the external processes of globalisation, urbanisation, population growth, and regional-level political and religious movements such as Salafism or political Islam. The extent to which tribalism is affecting the social and political organisation in Libya was explored during the survey (Cole and Mangan 2016: 9–11) of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) performed in 2015. The scope of the study included the affiliation of Libyans with three places located in a different historical area each. In Cyrenaica, named in the survey as East, the city of Tobruk was selected. In Tripolitania, West – Beni Walid – the town labelled as *azlam* was chosen. In Fezzan, in the Southwest, inhabitants of Sebha were under scrutiny. Due to the selected locations for the survey in various country areas, and its timing in the middle of the civil war, it could be expected that the collection of field data had been acquired by local examiners. Because of security concerns, the participation of external interviewers was not possible.

The survey results generally exposed a less significant role of tribe affiliation, in comparison to that of one's nationality. A stronger tribal identity has been discovered in the east of Libya, where federalist trends are also more significant. However, it seems that the results of the survey should consider the influence of "the culture of the victor" as well.

The defection of al Ubaidat commanders from Qaddafi military forces, already in February 2011, has placed this tribe inhabiting Tobruk at the ranks of *thuwar*. Therefore, the affiliation to this main tribe, or other tribes living in the Tobruk area, must be a reason to be proud for the respondents from the East. In the case of the West, the inhabitants of Beni Walid, even if its population is practically limited to one tribe only, are probably less keen to declare their ties to Warfalla labelled as *azlam*.

The complicated inter-tribal conflicts in Sebha led to the deployment of Misurata *militia* in the city. This decision of the Libyan government is tolerated by other tribes inhabiting Sebha, including the Tuareg and Tebu, as it is calming down the tensions among all the tribes in the area. Except for knowing the composition of the respondent groups, no additional clues concerning the influence

of "the culture of the victor" on the respondents could be drawn. However, a large number of tribes inhabiting the area with both *thuwar* (e.g., the Tubu) and *azlam* (e.g., the Tuareg) labels, could limit the influence of "the culture of the victor" on the surveyed sample.

Much stronger links to their country and to a family tribe were declared in all the three regions even if, simultaneously, a vast majority of the interviewed Libyans identified themselves with a particular tribe. Again, it could only be assumed that the respondents of Beni Walid and Tobruk were biased by "the culture of the victor."

According to the same USIP survey, tribe affiliation is becoming an idea remote from the daily life. This could be assumed since the contacts with tribal heads have been limited to random ones. Again, the respondents from a relatively small Beni Walid town (ca. 90.000 inhabitants) located in a remote, desert-like hermetic area contacted a tribal elder to the least extent. The USIP survey respondents are also declaring that it is a little more common among the tribe members than among those connected by blood ties or a common ancestor.

Moreover, the USIP study investigated the attitude of Libyans about the extent to which tribe membership should influence police, security services, and judicial system. There have been strong interlinks exposed between the tribes and the local police. The latter are recruiting tribes' members from the area, but simultaneously the police have to get tribal permission to act on a territory controlled by them (Cole and Mangan 2016: 3). This relation is valid for the stable tribal power structures. Otherwise, tribes would lose control, and sometimes, they would have to rely on militias from other areas. Tribal influence over the justice system is indirect, as either some cases are resolved directly through tribal arbitration or courts do not work due to the instability of security. However, according to the results of the study, the support for informal or non-state justice systems is marginal. Nonetheless, a significant majority see tribes as effective security providers, perhaps because the state has not been effective in that field. In summary, the respondents do require security and justice systems to be independent of tribal influence and provided by the state. According to the results of the said survey even if "powerful networks of leading notables and the heads of tribes remain influential in Libyan politics, security, justice and peacemaking, most Libyans have a remote connection to these activities and feel little association with tribe in their daily lives" (Cole and Mangan 2016: 11).

The results of the study should also be seen in the context of a specific process ongoing in other contemporary societies as well. It is an instrumental transformation of ethnicity from the one preserving the role of traditional, collective identity, into a convenient tool to reach economic and political goals. This way, ethnical identity is no longer supported by the old primordial ties, values or sentiments. It is a result of opportunistic collective choice made by individuals, who under other set of circumstances would select other groups or structures

for the realisation of selected tasks (Bokszański 2007: 100). Hence, the way to settle, for example, any security or business issue is to find the "right" person within the family circle. If such a key person is not present, the circle of research is being extended, preferably to tribe members.

A strong identification with the state allows one to make an assumption that Libyan community can evolve in terms of creating national identity by means of inter-ethnic integration. Applying a forward-looking perspective on the national identity one could assume that it will emerge based on the ongoing instrumental transformation of ethnicity. It means that identity will be generated through politicisation of ethnic groups looking to the future. In any case, minorities in Libya must be a part of this national identity building process. The nation is "a forward-looking community of interest […], [so the] future orientation provided by the national identity transforms the nation from a backward-looking ethno-cultural community concerned with preserving the past, into politicized interest group which intents on seizing control of its fate and destiny" (Connor 2013: 231).

Unfortunately, there are also other scenarios for the Libyan society development. The dispute between the Arab majority and the Amazigh minority is one of dozens within the Libyan society, which have come to the fore since the end of Qaddafi's 42-year rule. Its possible outcome was emotionlessly predicted by Mazigh Buzakhar, a co-founder of Tira and an Amazigh Research and Studies activist: "Whoever wins the [civil] war [in Libya] will fight Amazigh afterwards" (Zurutuza 2015: 1).

Minorities and Their Present Dilemmas

According to the results of USIP study presented above, Libyans have declared relatively strong national identity, however, the combined family, regional, and tribe affiliations still predominate over national loyalty. Other sources also confirm that the notion of citizenship remains problematic to many Libyans with their lack of trust to more impersonal institutions of the modern state (Vandewalle Edt 2011: 5). Examples of such attitudes are visible, for instance, in the governmental stalemate, where tribal and provincial rivalries are preventing an establishment of any meaningful centralised authority. The internationally recognised Government of National Accord was denied vote of confidence by the House of Representatives – a parliament based in Tobruk, also recognised internationally. Politicians close to Libya's eastern armed forces – Libyan National Army and its powerful commander, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar – have blocked their vote, saying they want to protect the military's future role (Al-Warfalli 2016: 1). A part of the puzzle is the second government based in Tobruk, and the second parliament, General National Congress, both being a result of the

failed implementation of Libyan Political Agreement signed in December 2015, in Skhirat, Morocco.

As expressed by the British Ambasador to Libya, Peter Millett, according to evidence gathered before the meeting of the Select Committee on the European Union in July 2016: "[…] there are three regions. Libyans tend to identify first and foremost with the family, and their tribe, their city and their region. Senses of national interest are not unifying factors at the moment. […] it is going to take quite a while for Libyans to come back to a situation where they back their nation, rather than the tribe or city they come from" (Millet 2016: 9).

Remarkably, it is relatively easy to find areas under the influence of minorities and the position they had taken to solve their post-revolution dilemmas. the Amazigh, located close to the Tunisian border west of Tripoli, were the supporting forces of LNA (Libyan National Army), whereas the Tubus and the Tuaregs could be considered as being independent. The Tawerghas had lost their city. Thus, the dilemmas of Libyan minorities are ongoing.

Amazigh – the Amazigh[6] are native inhabitants of North Africa with population extending from Morocco's Atlantic coast to the line of the River Nile in Egypt. The arrival of Arabs in the region in the 7th century was the beginning of a slow and gradual process of Arabisation continued through the second wave of Arab incursion by the Hilalians.

Through centuries, the Amazigh were able to preserve their ethnic identity, but the speed of Arabisation intensified during the Qaddafi era. The Leader had banned the teaching of the Tamazight language and culture. Qaddafi considered Amazigh as being of "Arab origin" and Tamazight as "a mere dialect" or "a useless language" (Libya's Channel 2016: 21). The Amazigh could not register their non-Arab names. Libya's first Amazigh organisation was banned and anyone involved in its cultural revival prosecuted. "In addition, authorities were reluctant to provide official documentation attesting their citizenship" (Landinfo Report 2016: 21). This way of treatment during the Qaddafi time explains why the Amazigh, even those located far away from Benghazi, where the protests started, had joined *thuwars* at the beginning of the 17 February Revolution. Almost at the same time, the first teaching of Tamazight in schools (Zurutuza 2014: 1), and first broadcasts in that language from Qatar have been initialised (Zurutuza 2015: 1), reinforcing morale of this long suppressed nation.

The Amazigh played an important role during the uprising against Qaddafi, but today, they say they are feeling increasingly targeted against amid the growing political upheaval in the country. They expressed their anger and demanded recognition many times, for instance, when the country's first post-Qaddafi government did not include anyone from their large ethnic group (Murphy 2011). The Amazigh are both Muslims and Libyans, but they perceive Arabs as discriminating against

[6] *Amazigh* means 'free man' in the Tamazight language.

them. Some Arabs tend to look down on the Amazigh people, regarding them as an African tribe, or they fear that granting them special minority rights will fuel separatist aspirations (Laessing 2013: 1).

The Amazigh are determined to take the chance that the 17 February Revolution has brought, far beyond the recognition of their language and culture in the constitution. They are raising political demands concerning guaranteed seats in the government and in the parliament, an influence on Libyan flag and anthem. Furthermore, they want to have the area which the Amazigh currently populate, to be defined precisely in the already drafted local constitution as "an area between coast of Zwara, the mountains of Nafusa and the oasis of Ghadames."

Tebu – the Tebu is a Saharan ethnic group living across southern Libya, northern Chad and north-eastern Niger. It is estimated that several thousand Tebu people reside in Libya, in particular in the Tibesti Mountain region, along the border with Chad, and in Kufra, in the south of the country.

During the war with Chad, Qaddafi granted Libyan citizenship to a number of nomadic Tebu living in the Aouzou strip. It is a part of northern Chad, rich in minerals, which Qaddafi was trying to conquer during the 70s. However, in 1996 and again in 2007, he decided to revoke the citizenship granted to them. The administration implemented respective decrees stating that "they [owners of documents issued in Aouzou] were not Libyans but Chadians" (Independent Advisory Group on Country Information 2016: 18). However, seeking the Tebu's support during the last months of regime, Qaddafi has annulled the 1996 decree. After 17 February Revolution, the administration did not settle the issue. Over a thousand people have been denied participation in the 2012 election because their documents were considered cancelled according to the 1996 decree which had stripped anyone associated with Aouzou of their nationality (Tilburg University after Independent Advisory Group on Country Information 2016: 18).

Tuaregs – the Tuareg people are most probably the descendants of North African Berbers who have been pushed out of Fezzan region of Libya to the south. They live across southern Algieria, southern Libya, eastern Mali, northern Niger and north-eastern Burkina Faso. The Tuaregs may be considered as semi-nomadic nowadays, because even if seasonally they travel with their herds, they possess their home area where they grow some crops (Nwadinobi 2016: 1). The main settlements of the Tuareg people in Libya are in the area around Ghat.

Contrary to other North African tribes, the matrilineal Tuareg's community applies the Quranic rule of gender equality in an orthodox way, neglecting the traditional interpretation of verse 4.34 of Quran, adopted by other Muslim communities, where men have been described as "guardians" over women. Tuareg women are participating in the decision making, they can inherit property and initiate a divorce procedure. They do not wear hijab. Veiling a face with an indigo-dyed cloth is an attribute of men. The mother's tent is the base of the community, a place where everybody returns to.

The Tuaregs' role in the 17 February Revolution was different from that of the Amazigh and the Tebu. Qaddafi was using the Tuaregs as a tool for the control of Sahara and Sahel. It started in the early eighties when they were recruited into the army as mercenaries. It is assumed that during the revolution, from fifteen hundred to five thousand Tuareg fighters supported Qaddafi forces. However, when Qaddafi's fate was almost decided, they resolved to leave the conflict areas. In the middle of 2011, there were tales about the Tuareg leaving for the south with anything they could load on their trucks and SUVs. They went mainly to Mali, which had a spillover effect on the Libyan crisis. The fighting in northern Mali, in turn, brought the refugees to Niger. Even if some Libyan Tuareg opposed Qaddafi, the tribe is perceived as *azlam*.

After the revolution, the territories inhabited by the Tuareg tribe were a scene of clashes with the *thuwar*s. In May 2012, like in Ghadames and the nearby the Awaal, local Tuaregs faced the revolutionary brigadesmen. The post-revolution activities of the Tuaregs were shifting them back to the stream of national politics. The National Movement for the Tuaregs (NMT) announced its support for the Government of National Accord (Khalifa 2015: 1).

Black Libyans – dark-skinned Libyans who are neither Tubu nor Tuareg. The Tawergha tribe belongs to a Black Libyan minority defined that way.

The dark-skinned Tawergha have been stigmatised as sympathisers of the late dictator Qaddafi because during the 17 February Revolution they went to the *azlam* side. The Tawergha have been accused specifically of participation in the 3-month siege of Misurata. The city of Tawergha, located about 40 kilometres to the south-west of Misurata, was at that time the base of Qaddafi forces.

In mid-August 2011, the Tawergha have been driven out of their city and other two villages of Tomina and Karareem by the Misurata militia. It is estimated that almost thirty thousand inhabitants including women and children were expelled. The Tawergha joined the crowd of internally displaced people[7](Zaptia 2016: 1) seeking shelter in makeshift camps and private housing around the country.

The militia took revenge for the perceived atrocities that the Tawergha committed during the siege. Misuratans held their neighbours from the south-west responsible for the war crimes including mass rapes, which majority of the Tawergha people deny. The issue is very sensitive as this crime is beyond the moral system and therefore seems unresolvable. There is only a way to deal with a single rape within the community, by putting the blame on the woman. During the Qaddafi time, raped women were ostracised for staining their family's honour and isolated in a special detention centre in Tajoura (Deif 2006: 1).

At the beginning of 2012, when the Tawergha leaders offered a formal apology to the people of Misurata (Libya Herald 2012: 1) for the death and destruc-

[7] Estimated in 2016 to be circa 350,000 <https://www.libyaherald.com/2016/08/19/increased-number-of-returnees-due-to-some-improved-security-iom-libya/>

tion caused by Qaddafi's forces, Misuratans remained unshaken and refused to negotiate. Even the settlement reached two years later does not seem to be final. The reconciliation agreement signed in Tunis on September 1, 2016, between Misurata and Tawergha, which could facilitate the return of the Tawergha people to their town before the end of the year, is also not seen by many as the final one.

Interactions between Minorities

The problem of minorities is their limited cooperation, even if they face the same challenges in the post-revolution Libya. Racial discrimination exists against all dark-skinned citizens, including those of sub-Saharan origin. Basing on the criterion of being either truly "Libyan" or not, the government officials and journalists advocate the expulsion of the Tebu and Tuareg minority groups affiliated with their political rivals. In spite of living in peace since the peace treaty had been signed in the late 19th century, the Tebu and the Tuareg have been competing for the control of the lucrative trade and smuggling in the south. The recent conflict between these two minorities broke out in August 2014, due to the increased influence of the Tebu community. Clashes caused human losses on both sides and more than 85 per cent of the population in Obari was displaced. The lines of division in this conflict were not only between *thuwar* and *azlam*, but also across the less and more radical *thuwar* (Operation Dignity – Haftar supporters vs. Libya Dawn – Misurata militia). The fighting ended thanks to the Qatari government's involvement, who brokered Tebu-Tuareg ceasefire and the withdrawal from Obari (Moustafa 2015: 1). The peace deal was considered as an international success, so the UN Secretary General congratulated the Qatari on this agreement.

However, recently, the Tebu and Tuareg people again have been able to cooperate in some political activities. Such acts occurred occasionally, for instance in 2015, when Tebu and Tuareg members together walked out of the Constitution Drafting Assembly (Libya Herald 2015: 1), in the act of protest against the attitude towards their demands to consider both languages as official in the new Libya. Furthermore, along with the Tebus, the Tuaregs demanded seats in the cabinet and parliament (Libya Herald 2016a: 1). As a result, some efforts to end the boycott by the Tebu and Tuareg members of the Constitution Drafting Assembly were undertaken (Libya Herald 2016b: 1).

Some joint actions of the three main minority groups were noted as well. On February 20, 2014, the Amazigh, Tebu, and Tuareg unanimously boycotted the election to the Constitution Drafting Assembly. All three tribes were entitled only to six out of sixty places in the said body. Being, as it was perceived, under-represented they were afraid that the decisions on their essential aspirations concerning Libya's official languages could be taken against them (Toaldo 2014: 2).

However, the minorities should not be considered only as the victims of discrimination. They are also a vital part of the solution of the Libyan crisis. The Tuaregs and Tebus, both located in the south of Libya, are controlling the essential areas in respect of the inflow of weapons, immigrants, fighters, and drugs. "Whoever will govern Libya, institutions will be interested in collaborating with Tebus, Tuaregs and tribes settled in the South, as cooperation with them would undermine some destabilizing factors affecting the country. Finding an agreement with the two ethnic communities will be possible only by tackling the problems caused by policies carried out in the past" (Siggillino 2015: 1).

Minorities Dilemmas – Prospects of Solution

The vast part of minorities' dilemmas in Libya, concerning which *thuwar* group to support and which not, emerged due to the lack of a central, credible government. Such government should be able and willing to listen to the minorities and to meet their cultural, economic, and political demands in line with the interests of all Libyans. These demands do not seem to exceed the basic needs of minority groups in any modern society. They are ranging from Libyan citizenship for all the minorities' members, recognition of their culture and language, assignment of a number of seats in parliament and in the government that is proportional to the population size, to the right to use their own flag and anthem. A suggestion how to build a credible central government in Arab countries was presented by a columnist of Foreign Policy.

> First, they will need leaders willing and able to think and act in truly national terms, transcending their narrow sectarian, corporatist, family, and religious affiliations. […]
>
> Second, [they …] need inclusive and legitimate institutions that aren't hostage to political intrigue or playthings of the elites that compete for power. Their primary objective should be representing the nation's citizens — not the perpetuation of their own perquisites and those of the ruling elite.
>
> And third, [it …] needs a mechanism for negotiating differences and accommodating polarization without it spilling into the streets. As the recent riots in Egypt and the killing of Tunisian opposition leader Chokri Belaid show, the alternative to this is violence and murder. (Mueller 2013: 1)

Fulfilling all of the said conditions is difficult in Libya, especially the first one. During a one-off evidence session, the British Ambassador to Libya was asked if he knew a leading person who "may not be as clearly committed to democracy as many of us would like but could [now] hold the country together (Millet 2016: 9). His answer: "Of course, Libya has a strong leader for 42 years,"

reflects the feeling of some Libyans that the life after 17 February Revolution is more difficult than during the Qaddafi era. From this perspective, the

> UK parliamentary investigation into the British and western intervention in Libya in 2011 and international involvement with the country since then has lambasted British policy as being based on inadequate intelligence and a lack of an understanding of Libya. [Prepared] report […] suggests, that the intervention should not have taken place [… and] declaring that the UK's policy towards Libya was handicapped from the start by a lack of knowledge about Libya's tribal relationships and the various influences within the country, particularly about presence of Islamists among the revolutionaries and their [sic!] to use the revolution to take over the country. (Fornaji 2016: 1)

The hope to fulfil both remaining conditions has been brought by the Nalut reconciliation conference on the 16 September, 2016. Collective efforts put various Libyan groups together: Qaddafi supporters, the Benghazi Shoura Council, Barqa Federalists. The fact that the meeting attended by around a thousand delegates has been arranged in the Amazigh city, in the far west Jebel Nafusa, and under the decoration consisting of Libyan national and Amazigh flags, was very meaningful for minorities and all Libyans. A five-point closing communique, which was a result of the reconciliation conference, stressed: the integrity of Libyan territory, rejection of external interference in Libya's national interests, dismissal of any meeting held outside Libya and help with holding the Libya-Libya dialogue, support for state institutions such as army, police, and judiciary system and finally, implementation of comprehensive measures and formation of committees to draw up a roadmap for national reconciliation (Zaptia 2016: 1).

Reconciliation is widely expected within the Libyan torn-apart society. It could be noted that lifting of Force Majeure by NOC on the west crescent loading terminals in September 2016 has caused about 20 per cent increase in the black-market exchange rate of Libyan Dinars against US Dollar practically overnight.

With the moderate success of the reconciliation congress in Nalut, there is a hope that "the culture of the victor," that is, the division into the *thuwar* and *azlam,* will play a less meaningful role in the near future, enabling national reconciliation and the co-existence of various groups within the Libyan society.

There is no other peaceful alternative for the Libyan society as a whole, but a dialogue and reconciliation. As expressed by Zygmunt Bauman: "Nationalism and the adjuration of ethnic unity are a substitute of missing integration factors in a disintegrated society" (Bauman 2016: 123). The situation of minorities in Libya proves that this is valid for the Libyan society as well.

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